

NCW Workshop on Gender Equality

1450. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a two-day national workshop on Gender and Law Enforcement was recently organized by the National Commission for Women (NCW) in the capital;

(b) if so, what important decision were taken to bring about gender equality; and

(c) what steps are being taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national activities?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Some of major recommendations made in the workshop relate to:

- (i) amendments in certain laws affecting women such as those relating to dowry, rape, maintenance and bigamy;
- (ii) gender sensitization of police personnel, prosecutors and judiciary;
- (iii) Strengthening of Family Courts; and
- (iv) reservation for women in judiciary, prosecution and police establishments.

(c) A Statement is annexed.

Statement

Steps taken by the Government to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national activities

The Government has recently adopted a National Policy for the Empowerment of Women with the objective to ensure equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic spheres. The year 2001 has been declared as Women's Empowerment Year to focus on women

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specific issues and accelerate action thereon to enable women to take their rightful place in the mainstream and participation in the nation's development.

Government of India has instituted five National Awards known as Stree Shakti Puraskars, in 1999 to be given annually to honour and recognize the achievements of individual women who have triumphed under difficult circumstances and have fought for and established the rights of women.

Initiative such as the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in 1993 have enabled the women to participate in decision making at the very grassroots levels through the Panchayati Raj Institutions and local bodies.

The Constitution (Eighty Fifth) Amendment Bill, reserving 30% of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislatures has been introduced in Parliament.

The Government through its Self Help Group based schemes facilitates accessibility of women to micro-credit, which encourages participation of women in the economic sphere.

The Government has set up a National Commission for Women to *inter alia*, undertake promotional and educational research so as to suggest ways of ensuring due representation of women in all spheres.

The Government has also taken several other steps to empower the women and to counter the gender bias against women and girl children such as the recently held convention of religious leaders organised by NCW and the Indian Medical Association to build a consensus about the heinous practices of female foeticide and infanticide. Through such activities the Government is striving to create social awareness so as to remove the gender bias completely.

The National Council for Educational Research & Training has undertaken a project to review the school curricula in order to remove gender bias from text books.

The Government has set up women polytechnics to impart technical education to them.

A certificate programme entitled 'Empowering Women Through

Self Help Groups' in the Distance Education mode, for functionaries in the field of women's development and empowerment has been initiated by the Department with the collaboration of Indira Gandhi National Open University and Indian Space Research Organisation.

The Government has been regularly reviewing the laws concerning women in order to remove gender bias and to make them more stringent and effective to protect the rights of women.

All the activities build up self confidence in women and they become capable of participating in social and national activities of the country.

Promotion of Bengali language

1451. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any Centrally funded programme to promote Bengali one of the richest modern languages; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) Government is committed to the promotion and development of all the Indian languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution including Bengali.

The Central Institute of Indian Languages, (Mysore) (CIIL) a subordinate office of the Department, conducts the following programmes for the promotion of Bengali.

- (i) 10 months Intensive Training Programme in Bengali for non-native learners.
- (ii) Training and Instruction in Bengali through distance education mode and correspondence courses.
- (iii) In service training for Bengali school teachers Besides, audio, audio-video and computer-aided language teaching